



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** November 5, 2015  
**TO:** State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Rick Joseph  
Michigan Teacher of the Year (MTOY)  
**SUBJECT:** November MTOY Report

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, I spent the day at Dewitt High School in the classroom of Jeff Croley, a drama and yearbook teacher. Along with Jason LaFay, who teaches English, the two created the Idea Hive, a classroom space that has been deinstitutionalized to resemble, as I would describe it, an upscale coffee shop. It is a comfortable space where creativity flourishes and students feel empowered to take risks and grow beyond their comfort zones. While at the Idea Hive, I led classroom discussions with students about the strengths and challenges they face at Dewitt and how they can empower themselves to advocate for change. I wrote a blog post about my experience that was published on the Meemic Foundation blog.

On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, I met with Representative, Mike McCready; Senator Marty Knollenberg; and Representative Jim Townsend in their Lansing offices. Thanks to the support of Ben Williams, Legislative Liaison at the Michigan Department of Education, I was able to see all three in the same day. I applauded the legislators on their support of a variety of education initiatives and urged them to continue to work on behalf of the students in our state. I invited them to come to my classroom, and they all expressed an interest in spending time in schools. They also urged State Board members, teachers, and the general public to contact them on behalf of issues they support.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, I spent the morning at Deerfield Elementary School in the Avondale school district with Mary Scholz's fifth graders. I read the Junkyard Wonders to three separate classes and facilitated a discussion and follow-up activity.

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, my application for the National Teacher of the Year award was submitted to the CCSSO.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, I spent the day at Hamtramck High School delivering three separate professional learning experiences to the entire staff. The topic was content area literacy, and the teachers focused on the four dimensions of the Reading Apprenticeship framework.

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